

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (withdrawn - currently amended) A method for producing a fluid-pervious fabric for imparting a pattern to a ~~fibre~~ fiber web, said fabric comprising at least one polymer material with a softening temperature, a first surface, a second surface opposite said first surface, and a fabric structure comprising a plurality of channels providing fluid permeability between said first and said second surfaces, the method comprising bringing said second surface into contact with an essentially rigid support having a fabric-contacting side with first fabric patterning members in a desired configuration and a backside opposite said fabric-contacting side, heating the fluid-pervious fabric to a temperature higher than said softening temperature, and applying a forming pressure between said first surface and said second surface, so that said first fabric patterning members contribute to a deformation of said fabric structure in the Z-direction in deformation zones in which said fluid permeability remains essentially unchanged, whereafter cooling said fluid-pervious fabric down to a temperature lower than said softening temperature in order to render said deformation in the Z-direction permanent.

2. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 1, wherein the forming pressure is created by means of first and second press surfaces arranged in order to form a press nip,

wherein said first fabric patterning members are provided on said first press surface being part of said support, and are cooperating with inverse, second patterning members on said second press surface.

3. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 1, wherein a heater is provided in at least one of said press surfaces and heats said fabric structure at least in positions intended to become said deformation zones.

4. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 2, wherein the fluid-pervious fabric is preheated before said deformation in the Z-direction.

5. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 2, wherein at least one of said press surfaces is provided on a rotatable embossing roll.

6. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 2, wherein the second fabric patterning members are provided on a single point deforming element programmed for generating said deformation in a chosen configuration across at least one of said surfaces of said fluid-pervious fabric contacting said support.

7. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 1, wherein the forming pressure is created at least partially by means controlling the pressure in a fluid provided on at least one side of a flexible and elastic, fluid-impermeable membrane, which in cooperation with

said first fabric patterning members causes said deformation in the Z-direction of the fluid-pervious fabric.

8. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 1, wherein also said support is fluid-pervious, wherein a fluid of a higher temperature than said softening temperature is passed through said channels of said fluid-pervious fabric and through said support at a flow rate sufficient for generating said forming pressure and causing said deformation in the Z-direction.

9. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 3, wherein a flexible and elastic membrane with a lower fluid permeability than said fabric structure is brought into contact with said first surface of said fluid-pervious fabric, and that said fluid is passed through said membrane, said fabric and said support, wherein said membrane provides a contribution to said forming pressure .

10. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 7, wherein the support comprises a heating zone in which said fluid is added for heating said fabric and creating said forming pressure.

11. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 7, wherein the support comprises a cooling zone subsequent to said heating zone.

12. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 7, wherein the fluid-pervious fabric is heated with heated air before said deformation in the Z-direction, and that the fluid-pervious fabric thereafter is cooled down with cooled air in order to render said deformation permanent.

13. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 7, wherein the support is a rotatable, cylindrical roll.

14. (withdrawn) The method according to claim 7, wherein the support comprises a sintered metallic material or a metal wire.

15. (currently amended) A fluid-pervious fabric for imparting a pattern to a ~~fiber~~ fiber web, said fabric comprising at least one polymer material with a softening temperature, a first surface, a second surface opposite said first surface, and a fabric structure comprising a plurality of channels providing fluid permeability between said first and said second surface, wherein the fluid-pervious fabric exhibits a permanent deformation of said fabric structure in the Z-direction in deformation zones in which said fluid permeability is essentially equal to the fluid permeability in fabric zones outside said deformation zones.

16. (previously presented) A fluid-pervious fabric according to claim 15, wherein the polymer material exhibits portions which have been softened and subsequently solidified in the deformation zones.

17. (previously presented) The fluid-pervious fabric according to claim 15, wherein the fluid-pervious fabric exhibits said deformation across at least one of said surfaces.

18. (currently amended) A patterned ~~fi~~bre fiber web, comprising a plurality of ~~fi~~bres fibers arranged in a ~~fi~~bre fiber structure having a basis weight and a porosity, wherein the ~~fi~~bre fiber web exhibits a deformation of said ~~fi~~bre fiber structure in the Z-direction in deformation zones, wherein the basis weight and the porosity within said deformation zones are essentially equal to the basis weight and porosity outside the deformation zones.

19. (currently amended) The patterned ~~fi~~bre fiber web according to claim 18, wherein the deformation zones are visible across both surfaces of said ~~fi~~bre fiber web.

20. (currently amended) The patterned ~~fi~~bre fiber web according to claim 18, wherein the ~~fi~~bre fiber web has been wet-formed or foam-formed.

21. (currently amended) The patterned ~~fi~~bre fiber web according to claim 18, wherein the ~~fi~~bre fiber web has been air-laid.

22. (currently amended) The patterned ~~fi~~bre fiber web according to claim 18, wherein the ~~fi~~bre fiber web has been hydraulically apertured or entangled.

23. (currently amended) The patterned ~~fi~~bre fiber web according to claim 18, wherein the ~~fi~~bre fiber web has been through-air dried (TAD).

24. (currently amended) The patterned ~~fi~~bre fiber web according to claim 18, wherein the patterns in the ~~fi~~bre fiber web have been created by means of forming or patterning/aperturing on, or drying or shaping in contact with at least one fluid-pervious fabric according to claim 15.